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Country cooperation frameworks and related matters

Assistance to the Republic of Congo

Note by the Administrator

I. Introduction and background

1. In its decision 94/10 of May 1994, the Executive Board authorized the Administrator to continue assistance to the Republic of Congo on a project-by-project basis owing to the ongoing civil strife, which had hindered the resumption of normal programming.

2. The first country cooperation framework (CCF) for the Republic of Congo (DP/CCF/PRC/1) was submitted to the Executive Board at its third regular session in 1997. However, as a result of the persistent crisis and the political stalemate, the Board decided in decision 97/29 to postpone consideration of the first CCF.

3. During 1998 and 1999, UNDP, like other United Nations development agencies and development partners, has been unable to resume its normal programming because of the continuation and escalation of hostilities in the country. Nonetheless, UNDP supported the coordination of humanitarian activities and through an international non-governmental organization implemented trauma-counselling activities and medical care to 1,400 female victims of rape. UNDP also provided assistance to income-generating activities in neighbourhoods where thousands of civilians are being reintegrated. These small-scale activities have assisted over 3,000 households — approximately 15,000 persons — focusing mainly on women and vulnerable groups.

II. UNDP support

4. The main challenge facing the Government will be to reintegrate all the displaced people who are returning to their neighbourhoods. Out of 810,000 people (30 per cent of the population) who had been displaced since December 1998, more than 200,000 have now returned, many in extremely poor conditions and seriously malnourished. The capacity to manage the economy needs to be rebuilt as it has been greatly weakened by the disruption caused by population displacements, including those of civil servants and by the destruction of the administrative infrastructure during the civil war.

5. Given these challenges and in view of the peace prospects resulting from the ceasefire agreement signed between the Government and the opposition forces, UNDP, in consultation with the relevant authorities, will continue to support the country in 2000 in two main areas: (a) assistance to war-affected communities in their efforts to re-establish social services and livelihoods to enable the reintegration of their members, including ex-militia and (b) the building of governance capacities that are key to the building of

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durable peace, such as rebuilding judiciaries and legal systems, as well as other democratic institutions.

III. Executive Board action

6. In view of the above, the Executive Board may wish to:

> Authorize the Administrator to continue to approve assistance to the Republic of Congo on a project-by-project basis within the financial limitations of its established target for resource assignment from the core.

7. The Administrator assures the Executive Board that the situation will be reviewed on a continuing basis and that the regular country programming will be resumed as soon as conditions permit.